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ABSTRACT

An adult basic education (ABE) project was undertaken in 1977 in southern New Jersey to take instruction to students in rural areas. The region was one in which some 75% of the population had not completed high school. Centered in Millville with satellite centers in four rural townships whose secondary students are bussed to Millville, the project had as its objective to establish classes and measure student growth and attendance patterns. Satellite learning centers were set up in public and church facilities. To reach adults with little or no reading skills, a variety of recruiting methods were adopted, including an innovative "yellow box technique" which involved the community in recruiting. Instructors worked with students individually and in small groups, with 98% of the students opting for evening classes. Results showed use of satellite learning centers did not yield significantly higher growth and comprehension rates among rural learners than among those served by a single, centrally located unit; however, use of the satellites in recruitment did produce significantly more learners from among a rural population. Lack of English as a Second Language classes was viewed as a major problem because of the large Hispanic population. The model successfully adjusted learning environment to the unique needs of adult rural students. (RS)

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FINAL PROJECT REPORT

"MOBILIZING ADULT BASIC EDUCATION"

A Special Project in Adult Education
funded by the New Jersey State Department of Education
under section 309 of the Adult Education Act.

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OVERVIEW

Millville, New Jersey is a city of some 23,000 residents located in Southern New Jersey. Although classified as urban, Millville because of its 44.3 square mile area also possesses strong suburban and rural characteristics.

For over one hundred fifty years, Millville has been noted for two things; holly, which grows in such abundance that the city has been named "The Holly City" and glassware production, which was begun in 1806 and is now carried out by Wheaton Industries and Kerr Glass, both of whom are international producers.

Despite its notoriety as a glass production center, unemployment for Millville during the 1976-78 period has averaged 11.8%.

Ajoining Millville to the South and East are four rural municipalities whose secondary level students are bused to Millville, thus creating a sending/receiving relationship. These municipalities namely, Lawrence Township, Maurice River Township, Commercial Township, and Woodbine, are all faced with two major problems -- a high unemployment rate (14 to 19%) and a lack of public transportation facilities.

A 1975 study of Millville High School dropouts indicated that more than 60% were residents of these rural township sending districts. Statewide census information indicates that as much as 75% of this population has never completed high school with a substantial portion having less than an eighth grade education.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this project entitled "Mobilizing Adult Basic Education" is concisely summed up in the following two hypotheses to which the project was addressed.

(1) Instruction via a series of satellite learning centers will yield significantly higher growth and comprehension rates among rural learners than among those served by a single centrally located unit.

(2) The use of satellite centers in the recruitment process will produce a significantly greater number of learners from among a rural population than among those learners recruited for a centrally located unit.

It was the overall objective of this project to establish A.B.E. classes in Millville and in each of its sending districts and then to measure the growth and attendance patterns of the participating students.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

• SITE SELECTION

The immediate step in the establishment of this project was the location of sites for learning centers. Millville, of course posed no problem because of the existence of other adult classes at the Millville Senior High School. This, therefore, was selected as the master site or centrally located learning center.

The problem of rural site location was taken to the project advisory committee and received the following recommendations:

- (1) Local elementary classroom facilities should not be used because they lacked adult sized furniture, but, more importantly, because the local population would attach a stigma to "going back" to the same building where their children are taught.
- (2) Public facilities and church facilities should be explored as potential sites.

It should be noted that no funds were allocated in the project budget for facility rental. Therefore, all sites to be utilized had to be donated.

The project staff then set out to secure sites from the local clergy and/or local municipal officials. Cooperation was easily acquired when these officials and clergymen learned of the scope and potential of this project for their communities and congregations.

Satellite sites were secured at the following locations:

Lawrence Township - Municipal Building Number 2

Maurice River Township - Port Elizabeth Library

Commercial Township - Port Norris United Methodist Church &
Haleyville Church of God

Woodbine - Woodbine Human Resources Center

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

The major obstacles in recruitment were directly related to the rural nature and degree of literacy in these communities. Three of the four communities were served by one cable TV station, but it was doubtful that the target population utilized its programming for anything other than entertainment. One radio station served the area but its listening audience among the local population was generally limited to those closer to its location in Millville. Most of the population who listened to radio preferred the more popular stations some 40 miles away in Philadelphia.

The local newspaper serving this population was considered a reasonable choice, but it was readily admitted that it would be of no value in recruiting adults with little or no reading skills.

On the matter of recruitment, the project advisory committee was consulted and recommended the following:

- (1) Because of the high degree of illiteracy among the target population, all recruitment should be as direct as possible and not presume upon nonexistent reading skills.

- (2) Local civic leaders, merchants, and clergymen should be utilized in the recruitment campaign.

The project staff immediately implemented these recommendations and proceeded to contact in person, those persons whose positions, occupations, professions, or residences made them key persons in their community. As before, the local clergy were of invaluable assistance, with more than one recruiting directly from the pulpit.

Signs announcing the time and location of classes were placed in key locations. The staff also made promotional presentations before local PTAs and volunteer fire companies.

One extremely successful recruitment technique is what became known as the "yellow box technique." It merely consisted of placing in the shops of local merchants, a bright yellow shoe box with a slit in the top, near a large sign announcing the classes. Next to the box were small ballot-sized sheets on which a person could write his name, address, and telephone number or that of one or more individuals in need of the program. The ballot was then stuffed into the yellow box.

If the individual could not read the sign, he would always see the bright yellow box and could inquire of the store keeper or sales person regarding its purpose, since things of this sort were usually found in connection with some type of raffle or contest. This inquiry always resulted in the individual getting the full information on the classes and often the assistance of the shop keeper in completing his or her address blank.

The project staff checked the yellow boxes at each location twice each week during the recruitment period. Persons whose names were submitted were contacted directly by a teacher. This was done via telephone or personal visit.

INSTRUCTION

As soon as 6 or more students were recruited for a site, instruction was begun. While all sites were available for day and evening usage, 98% of enrolled students opted for evening instruction only. It was determined that the majority were employed during the day and could only devote evening hours for study.

Despite efforts to hold classes on more than one evening per week, only the Millville location succeeded in holding classes on two evenings. In the rural communities, students were involved in family activities, church activities or in work on other evenings and therefore could only devote one evening per week to instruction.

Upon entry into the program every student was tested using the Tests of Adult Basic Education Forms M and D. All persons scoring high on the M Form were given the D. If they scored at a reading grade level of 7.5 or above on the TABE D, they were given instruction in preparation for the G.E.D. test.

All instruction was conducted on a one-to-one or small group basis. Instructors retained an individual file on every student and worked with that student on individually prescribed items. Every student was given a prescription sheet which showed his progress and the items he was currently engaged in studying.

It was, therefore, possible to know immediately at what level a particular student was working. This was also beneficial for those who had to leave the program for a short period of time and then return later to continue their studies as in the case of those persons who were shift workers.

STUDENT DATA

Student data relative to instructional levels is contained on the

following charts which also include a compendium of student comments.
The data on the following 4 pages was taken directly from the Project
Evaluator's Report.

Student Achievement by Center

Port Elizabeth Center

<u>Student</u>	<u>Beginning Reading Level</u>	<u>Present Reading Level</u>	<u>Beginning Math Level</u>	<u>Present Math Level</u>
1	10th	GED	Fractions	Percents
2	Primer	2nd	Multi-digit-Multy	Fractions
3	2nd	4th	Long Division	Fractions & Decimal
4	6th	GED	Fractions	GED
5	6th	GED	Fractions	GED
6	5th	7th	Fractions	Decimals

Average gain in reading: 2.0 Grade levels (3.3)

Haleyville

1	6th	8th	Fractions	Decimals
2	7th	9.5	Fractions	GED
3	1st	4th	Long Division	Decimals
4	5th	8th	Mult. of Frac.	Percents
5	4.5	7th	Fractions	Percents
6	5	GED	Fractions	GED
7	7.5	GED	Fractions	GED
8	5.5	GED	Fractions	GED
9	7	GED	Fractions	GED
10	4.5	GED	Fractions	GED
11	10.0	GED	Fractions	GED
12	9	GED	Fractions	GED
13	5	6.5	Fractions	GED
14	4.0	5.0	Long Division	End of Frac.
15	10	GED	Fractions	Decimals
16	6.5	GED	Mult. of Frac.	GED
17	9.0	GED	Mult. of Frac.	GED
18	5.5	GED	Fractions	GED
			Fractions	GED

Average gain in reading: 2.2 Grade levels (3.8)

Cedarville

<u>Student</u>	<u>Beginning Reading Level</u>	<u>Present Reading Level</u>	<u>Beginning Math Level</u>	<u>Present Math Level</u>
1	3.5	8th	Fractions	Ratios & Prop.
2	Primer	1st	Mult. of whole #'s	Long Division
3	5.5	8th	Long Division	Percents
4	Primer	1st	Mult. of whole #'s	Fractions
5	Primer	2nd	Addit. of whole #'s	Mult. of Nos.
6	8.5	GED	Div. of whole #'s	GED
7	5.0	7.0	Fractions	Percents
8	6.0	GED	Fractions	GED
9	Primer	3rd	Long Division	Div. Fractions
10	5.5	GED	Fractions	GED
11	6th	8th	Fractions	Percents
12	9th	11th	Fractions	Percents
13	8th	10th	Fractions	Percents
14	3rd	6th	Mult. of whole #'s	Div. of Frac.
15	10.5	GED	Fractions	Fractions
16	7.5	9.0	Long Division	Div. of Frac.
17	11.0	GED	Addit. of whole #'s	Fractions

Average gain in reading: 2.2 grade levels (2.6)

Millville

1	4.5	6.0	Long Division	Mult. of Frac.
2	4.0	6.0	Long Division	Decimals
3	3.5	4.0	Mult. of whole #'s	Division
4	5.5	GED	Fractions	Algebra
5	8.5	GED	Fractions	Algebra
6	6.0	8.0	Mult. of whole #'s	Decimals
7	7.0	GED	Fractions	Decimals
8	7.5	GED	Mult. of Frac.	Decimals
9	Primer	3.0	Sub. of whole #'s	Long Div.
10	4.5	9.0	Fractions	Percents
11	5.0	6.0	Long Division	Fractions
12	7.0	9.0	Fractions	
13	Primer	2.5	Mult. of whole #'s	Fractions
14	4.0	6.5	Mult. of whole #'s	Fractions
15	6.5	GED	Fractions	Fractions
16	10.0	GED	Fractions	Fractions
17	10.0	GED	Fractions	Fractions
18	2.0	3.0	Fractions	Fractions
19	5.0	7.0	Sub. of whole #'s	Long Div.
20	4.5	6.0	Mult. of whole #'s	Fractions

Millville (Cont.)

<u>Student</u>	<u>Beginning Reading Level</u>	<u>Present Reading Level</u>	<u>Beginning Math Level</u>	<u>Present Math Level</u>
21	7.0	GED	Fractions	Fractions
22	7.5	9.0	Sub. of whole #'s	Percents
23	6.0	8.0	Long Division	Decimals
24	6.0	8.0	Sub. (borrowing)	Long Div.
25	7.0	8.0	Fractions	Div. of Frac.
26	2.5	4.0	Addit. of whole #'s	Long Div.
27	5.5	7.0	Long Division	Mult. of Frac.
28	Primer	3.0	Long Division	Decimals

Average gain in reading: 2.0 grade levels (2.5)

Other Centers

1	Primer	2nd	Subt. of whole #'s	Long Div.
2	6.5	GED	Percents	GED
3	4.0	4.0	Mult.	"
4	Primer	Primer	Fractions	
5	Primer	Primer	Fractions	
6	6.0	GED		
7	5.5	GED		
8	ESL	Woodbine	Long Div.	Fractions
9	7.0	9th	Fractions	Fractions
10	3.5	Woodbine	Fractions	Fractions
11	3.5	Woodbine		
12	ESL	Woodbine		
13	1st	3rd	Mult. of whole #'s	Fractions
14	6th	GED	Fractions	Percents
15	6th	8th	Fractions	Percents
16	3rd	6th	Mult. of whole #'s	Fractions

Average gain in reading: .9 grade levels (2.2)

NOTE: Grade Level Achievement computed for students below the GED Level. Scores in parentheses () represent achievement levels for all students if GED is equated with a 12th year Reading Level.

Student Comments About the Program

Instructors were encouraged to discuss student reactions to the program with the students. The Evaluator also talked to students during observations to obtain subjective information which was used to complement the objective data available.

Student comments included:

Cedarville Center

1. Enjoyed the class, liked everything about it. Thinks there should be more classes, wants to continue.
2. Like the class, but couldn't attend all the time because of work.
3. Good program. Did not like to be so close to the slow readers; hard to concentrate when teacher worked with slow students. Particularly liked the convenience of the location of the class.

Haleyville Center

1. Really liked the class and learned a lot. Good communication and teamwork between teacher and students.
2. I made a lot of progress and felt that I knew what I was doing. Things are explained and teachers work along with you.

Millville Center

1. Really like the class; it helped with the job. Got a salary increase because she did well in the tests she had to take to qualify. Feel the program meets individual needs.
2. Couldn't believe how much the program had done for her at age 73. Pleased with the progress.

Port Elizabeth

1. Liked the way instructors helped students and answered questions. Felt more comfortable than in the GED class that was attended for four sessions.
2. Didn't like the class; thought they would learn to read in two weeks like it says on television.

Port Norris Area

1. Enjoyed the program; transportation problems prevented attendance at Millville when transferred to that center.

MAJOR PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

(1) It was not possible throughout the duration of this project to establish any ESL classes.

(2) It was not possible to establish any classes at Woodbine.

Both of these problems go hand in hand since Woodbine is the location of a very large Hispanic population. Although a site was selected, all recruitment techniques produced no potential students during the initial recruitment phase.

At the midpoint of the project, a somewhat successful recruitment drive was conducted through a Spanish speaking priest of the local Roman Catholic Church. A class of 7 persons was recruited and the basement of the Church was secured as a classroom site for any evening class.

Instruction continued for about 6 weeks, but the enrollment never increased and after the first week attendance became erratic. Local recruitment and the continuation of classes were further curtailed when, following a civil disturbance, the local police placed a 7:00 p.m. curfew on all residents. Classes were discontinued and attempts to reinstitute them when the curfew was lifted proved futile.

EXTENSION INFORMATION

The project was granted a 120 day extension for the period September 1 through December 31, 1977. Because of the relatively short duration of this extension, instruction which was previously held at the satellite centers was discontinued and interested students were notified to report to the Millville Center. Evening attendance in A.B.E. totaled 34.

An innovation initiated at this time was day-time instruction at the

Millville Continuing Education Center. A schedule providing a total of 14 hours of classes per week between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. was established. Students were recruited via a small want-ad placed on the cover page of the local newspaper.

A total of 9 students were recruited and worked with instructors using individualized methods and materials. Since the evaluation report had already been conducted and based upon a September 1, 1977 closing date, data for these students is not included within it.

The group consisted of 6 women and 3 men. They were shift workers or housewives whose only free hours were consistent with the day-time schedule.

CONCLUSIONS

(1) Hypothesis #1 was not proven. Instruction via a series of satellite learning centers did not yield significantly higher growth and comprehension rates among rural learners than among those served by a single centrally located unit. This is evidenced by the following data:

<u>Site</u>	<u>Average Increase in Grade Level</u>
Cedarville	2.2
Haleyville	2.2
Port Elizabeth	2.0
Other Sites *	.9
Overall Satellite Total:	1.8
Millville	2.0
Overall Project Total:	1.9

(2) Hypothesis #2 was proven. The use of satellite centers in the recruitment process will produce a significantly greater number of learners from among a

rural population than among those learners recruited for a centrally located unit. This is evidenced by the following data:

<u>Site</u>	<u>No. of Students</u>
Cedarville	17
Haleyville	18
Port Elizabeth	6
Other Sites *	16
Satellite Total:	57
Millville	28
Project Total:	85

(3) Cost Per Instruction Hour: Average cost per instructional hour per participant was \$3.97. This was computed by multiplying the student ratio factor for each level (ABE, GED, ESL) by the gross instructional figure for the project and dividing it by the aggregate number of instructional hours received. On this basis the cost per instructional hour per participant in ABE is \$1.76, for GED it is \$1.72, and for ESL it is \$8.44. If the cost factor for the ESL component is removed then the average costs per instructional hour per participant becomes \$1.74.

(4) Follow-up Activities: In September 1977, the Boards of Education for Lawrence Township (Cedarville), Maurice River Township (Port Elizabeth), and Commercial Township (Haleyville) submitted applications to the New Jersey State Department of Education for the funding of positions for Director of Adult Education. This is the first step necessary to the implementation of a full program of Adult Continuing Community Education. This action was taken after the favorable review the Mobilizing Adult Basic Education Project received in each of these communities.

* Includes Port Norris and Woodbine